



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07494864 1

SONGS
AND
SONNETS

NORLEY
CHESTER





2⁰⁰

Mr. Garnett

With kind regards from

The Author

June 1902

SONGS AND SONNETS

BY

NORLEY CHESTER

Author of

"DANTE VIGNETTES," "STORIES FROM DANTE," ETC., ETC.



LONDON

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1899

**THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**ASTOR. LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**

B

L

To

HER WITHOUT WHOSE INSPIRING INFLUENCE

MANY OF THEM MIGHT NOT HAVE

BEEN WRITTEN, I DEDICATE THESE

SONGS AND SONNETS.

Bezanson 4.2.54

I am indebted to the Editors of the Literary World and of the Queen for kind permission to re-publish several of these poems ; and, in the case of "The Angel's Gift," to the Editor of the Monthly Packet.

CONTENTS

LOVE AND ART

PART I.—LOVE

	PAGE
Illimitability	7
Ideal Love	8
Human Love	9
Jealousy	10
Absence	11
Love's Healing	12
The Lady's Tears	13
Love's Yearning	14
Renunciation	15
Unworthiness	16
Love and Death	17
Resignation	18

PART II.—ART

Nature and Art	21
Art's Crown	22
Art's Reward	23
The Garden of Art	24
The Mission of Art	25
Despair Threatens	26
Art Forsakes	27

PART III.—LOVE AND ART

	PAGE
The Ten Years	31
The Lady's No	32
The Lady's Jewels	33
Attainment	34
Consummation	35

LOVE LYRICS

Affinity	39
Could I Forget	40
Had I but Known	42
The Mist of Morning	43
I Love Thy Spirit	44
I Used to Dread	45
I Would I Were a Comet	46
Thou Wert to Me a Poet	47
Thou Art to Me Like Music	48
Thou Art Like Summer Lightning	49
A Lost Past	51
That Day	52

SONGS OF ANGELS

The Angel's Gift	55
The Seraph Strayed	56
The Two Crowns	58
God's Smallest Angel	59
The Angel's Crown	63
The Small White Sin	65
The Fallen Angel	67
The Soul's Choice	74

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

	PAGE
Transcendentalism	79
Stagnation	80
Schiller	81
Goethe	82
Michael Angelo	83
Fra Angelico	84
Florence at Sunset	85
London	86
Vita in Morte	87
To a Child	88
Friendship	89
Sorrow	90
Success	91
Life	92
Death	93

MISCELLANEOUS LYRICS

Effort	97
To B. M. G.	99
Weep Not for Me	101
What My Love Demands	102
A Dream of Italy	104
A Lost Opportunity	107
Bondage	109
My Muse's Wooer	111
A Song of the Moors	112
The Laureate's Death	114

	PAGE
The Poet's Joy	116
Evolution	118
The Light on the Summit	119
The Angel's Flower	121
The Mountain Breeze	123
The Mountain Storm	125
Compensation	127
A Wish	128
My Heart's Inner Room	129
The Pessimist	130
Hopes	131
Envoy	133

LOVE AND ART

ARGUMENT

AN Artist loves, but remains silent owing to a consciousness of his own unworthiness. Having renounced Love he devotes himself to Art, but Art leaves him still dissatisfied. His character being now strengthened and developed through sacrifice and effort, Love again comes to him and he no longer turns from her. On Love becoming supreme in his life, he also for the first time attains in Art.

PART I

Love

ILLIMITABILITY

O LOVE, dear Love ! I could not love thee so
Unless I felt that I might love thee more,
As in a dream thou stand'st my soul before,
Thou fadest from my eager arms, as though
Thou needs must melt beneath my passion's glow ;
Thou break'st in waves upon my spirit's shore,
And still, however largely I adore,
I feel unfathomed depths I may not know.

Oh Art, dear Art, methinks I could not strive
If I should ever reach thy far ideal,
If at thy highest peak I might arrive
And all thy secrets grow defined and real,
Didst thou not too all outward form survive
By that Beyond we may not know but feel.

IDEAL LOVE

LAST night, dear Love, I saw thee in a dream,
Thy hair enwrapt thee as a silken shroud,
I did not dare to breathe thy name aloud,
Not flesh and blood could I thy presence deem ;
Then from thy eyes shot forth a starry beam,
And lo ! a rift came in the golden cloud,
And all thy beauty, peerless, pale, and proud,
Shone forth behind it in a sudden gleam.

But as my arms had sought thee to enfold,
My lips to press thy steadfast lips again,
Thou wast so chill, my very heart grew cold
Beneath thy glance of lightning-like disdain ;
Nay, rather let me never more behold
Thy spirit's shrine, than by one touch profane.

HUMAN LOVE

BUT yester eve I was content to love,
To worship thee, for just my worship's sake,
To thirst, nor strive my burning thirst to slake,
To see thee on my life's horizon move
As far as stars the night-wrapt earth above ;
To dream, nor wish from misty dreams to wake,
Nor yet the bars between our souls to break,
Love's rapture with the test of life to prove.

Thus yester eve—my star grows pale to-night,
It reels and swims before my soul's desire,
Till I would pluck it from its giddy height
And wear it on this restless heart of fire ;
What though its ray my path no more should
 light,
And Phoenix-like, Love in Love's flame expire.

JEALOUSY

A LITTLE cloud lay cradled on my soul—
A little cloud no bigger than a hand,
Who would have thought that it might thus
 expand,
And round my life with inky blackness roll ;
Nay, who would dream it sought so wide a goal,
And that by winds of inmost passion fanned,
It thus should spread upon my spirit's land
And by its darkness overshadow the whole.

And yet it should not fill me with surprise,
That other men my Lady's name will bless,
Should seek to drink the fountain in her eyes,
And kiss the ground her gentle footsteps press ;
The star which guides us from the far off skies
Lights others too, but lighteth us no less.

ABSENCE

AN hour ago the western sky was red,
And earth responded to the heavens' smile ;
An hour ago a little golden isle
Floated in seas of ether overhead.
An hour ago ! and now the light is dead,
Nor seeks the sky with promise to beguile
The mournful earth—'tis but so short a while,
Yet in that hour my happiness hath fled.

For then I loved and walked with her alone,
And then the world seemed very good and fair,
Then earth was girdled with a golden zone,
And nightingales made music in the air :
Now all sinks back to mournful monotone,
I hear no sound except my heart's despair.

LOVE'S HEALING

COME near and lay thy hand upon my brow—
Thy little hand so white and cool and calm,
That with its touch thy spirit's healing balm
Upon the wounds which rack my soul may flow ;
Alas ! I fear—but thou canst never know
The secret of my spirit's vague alarm ;
Come near and soothe me with that gentle charm
Pure as the breath from far-off Alpine snow.

She came to me, so stately, fair, and wise ;
She gazed at me with tender looks that yearned
To soothe my torture. Ah ! she had not learned
Whence all my restless fever would arise.
“ Leave me,” I said, and then she slowly turned
With tears of wistful wonder in her eyes.

THE LADY'S TEARS

BUT yet my Lady wept to see my pain,
My burning pain which she alone could heal,
I felt those drops upon my spirit steal
Till it revived as flowers beneath the rain ;
I bless those drops and then my soul again
Beneath a pang of sharp remorse must reel ;
I made her weep—my Lady for whose weal
My flood of passion I alone restrain !

And yet methinks she would not grudge that dew,
That healing dew which on my spirit fell,
Would not have spared those crystals from the
 well
Of deepest pity in her heart so true ;
Would stoop from Heaven my tongue to cool in
 Hell
If she the story of my anguish knew.

LOVE'S YEARNING

THIS wingèd wish against my heart will beat,
That from her height my Lady should incline,
Till those sweet eyes which as my lodestar shine
Gaze at me kneeling humbly at her feet,
Then with one kiss, swift, unrestrained, and
sweet,

Her soul o'erflowing spend itself on mine,
And, consecrated by that precious wine,
My Love be crowned and know itself complete.

And yet 'tis best, since Fate hath willed it so,
Best for my soul, Love's own reward to miss,
Could it that moment of fulfilment know
Would joy not die, slain by excess of bliss ?
Let me still seek as weary winds that blow
Round flowers they love but dare not hope to
kiss.

RENUNCIATION

I AM resolved, and my resolve is this :—
She shall not know the passion in my breast,
My restless heart would be but rough a nest,
For such a tender soul as hers, I wis ;
I will be mute, though by dumb lips I miss
The one delight of all delights the best—
Torture for me ? Ah, well ! but let that rest ;
We artists were not meant for human bliss.

And if I pluck the fairest flower that grows
To hold it in my hot and fevered hand,
Would it not pine for that free wind that blows
Round open meads where God's own buds
expand,
Then droop and fade, as fade the winter snows,
When fervent summer stirs the sleeping land ?

UNWORTHINESS

THAT day we wandered 'neath the forest trees.
She had been mine if I had said one word ;
My heart's swift beating almost had been heard,
Save that it mingled with the rustling breeze ;
The sunlight throbbed like waves in summer seas,
And overhead one happy little bird
Poured forth his soul till every leaflet stirred ;
Love seemed abroad and all a part of these.

She had been mine ; her love was ripe to start
And spring to life at Love's first throbbing touch ;
I gave no sign, because I loved too much ;
Therefore my Love and I must dwell apart ;
My life is stained and marred ; ah ! Sweet, not
such
The Altar where should rest thy pure white heart.

LOVE AND DEATH

I HAD a dream in which my Love lay dead,
Her face was whiter than the driven snow,
Her lips still held the spirit's parting glow,
Like sunset skies when daylight first hath fled ;
Then from my soul all thought of joy swift sped—
My Love was slain, my Love lay pale and low—
And earth it seemed could hold no more of woe,
No darker shade could on my life be shed.

Oh ! wild, swift pain, this was a dream, no more ;
Waking there came the thought with sudden bliss,
That though my Love should reach the further
 shore,
Though all my life her presence still should miss,
My heart would hold its passion as of yore ;
Not Death himself could rob my soul of this !

RESIGNATION

I SHALL not see my Lady's face again,
I shall not breathe that subtle atmosphere
Through which her spirit shines serene and clear,
Nor hear the voice for which my soul is fain ;
'Tis not for me through all life holds of pain
To feel her presence—she will not be near
In all the years—Nay, that should be no tear,
Grief is not needed, Love will still remain.

Have I not seen her, known that she was sent
By God to make the world more pure and sweet ?
And stars above, and flowers beneath my feet
Are hers and mine ; she is with Nature blent
In all my worship. Though no more we meet
'To me one moment was her spirit lent.

PART II

Art

NATURE AND ART

I FOLLOWED once a wanton, wayward child,
Whose laughter listening echoes roused to glee,
She led me on where winds blow fresh and free,
She bad me leap the torrents deep and wild ;
She climbed far heights, and when the dawn shone
mild,

Shook golden tresses o'er the open lea ;
Her voice was filled with murmurs of the sea,
And in her eyes was Heaven when she smiled.

She led me to a stately throne apart,
Whereon sat one, with eyes which shot forth
flame ;
Since then this mistress doth my service claim,
And when again in wild pursuit I start,
She bids me linger. Wouldst thou learn her
name ?

I followed Nature, but am bound to Art.

ART'S CROWN

My mistress Art I once beheld incline,
With eyes which filled my inmost soul with fear,
"Poor lover thou," she cried in tones austere,
"What off'ring hast thou which can match with
mine?"

I gave her gems, I gave her costly wine
Pressed by my feet when autumn leaves were sere,
I tore the treasure which I held most dear,
The secret treasure from Life's sacred shrine.

Still not enough ; I saw her brow still frown
And scorching glances from her features dart ;
One thing remained ; forthwith I seized my heart
And at her feet I laid it humbly down ;
She held it up, and with the drops that start
From that deep fount she made herself a Crown.

ART'S REWARD

IN truth no half devotion Art demands,
O'er those she rules she holds unbending sway,
For her I strive, for her pursue the way,
The hard rough way which tears my feet and
 hands,
Till crimson drops run down and stain the sands,
Or leave their mark on granite cold and grey,
And those who follow pause awhile and say,
"These speak of service in the arid lands."

And my reward ? O Art, thou didst not deign
To crown my efforts with thy laurels green,
Thou gav'st me roses, but the thorns between
Pressed on my soul till it grew red with pain ;
But thou didst kiss me, and that kiss, my queen,
Sent thine own rapture through each throbbing
 vein.

THE GARDEN OF ART

"BEHOLD!" Art cried, "the path that seemed so
stern,
The way that thou erstwhile with pain didst
tread,
The stones which gashed thee till thy footprints
red,
Marked the cold ground, the sand which seemed
to burn,
The dreary wastes where thou for shade didst
yearn,
The steep ascent, where hopeless tears were shed,
The hard grey rocks." I gazed, and saw instead
A garden filled with growing flower and fern.

And then she smiled; "Lo, this," she said, "my
power;
Across thy path I wave my magic wand;
Now from this height gaze down and understand
Why toil I gave thee in noon's heated hour;
Each crimson drop has blossomed as a flower,
Each tear fed streams which water all the land."

THE MISSION OF ART

WHEN I stand up before God's judgment throne,
What shall I bear as trophy of the fight,
By whom the wrong was never rendered right,
Nor sounding trumpet-call of duty blown?
And yet to me is effort also known,
For I have climbed to many a toilsome height,
Thence eagle-like to gaze upon the light,
Though Art my beacon, Art and Art alone.

Not all in vain perchance I may have striven,
Have stood where elements their flags unfurled,
Where earthly clouds by lightning shafts were
 riven,
And God's own thunderbolts around were hurled;
Have sought to catch one little ray from Heaven
And light with it a sorrow-stricken world.

DESPAIR THREATENS

THE radiant presence with the shining wings,
Whose eyes alone can fill the world with light,
Just touched my day and left me to the night
Of dark'ning shades and half-concealèd things.
And now to Art, to Art my spirit clings,
For her I work, for her alone I fight ;
Hath she no gifts my service to requite
But that reward which knowledge of her brings ?

Alas ! I stand with empty, outstretched arms,
Alas ! each day her lips, more mute and cold,
Still less and less unto my own respond ;
O God ! now save me from my vague alarms,
If Art too fails, if Art Thou dost withhold,
What have I here or in the life beyond ?

ART FORSAKES

ALAS ! I see thee on the heights above,
But now no more thou hark'nest to my cry,
No more I feel thy gracious presence nigh ;
What more dost crave my Art, my Hope, my Love?
Have I not followed where thy footsteps move,
Have sought to climb the summits steep and high,
Have fixed with thine my gaze on yon blue sky ;
Is it in vain for thee I fought and strove ?

Dumb are the lips, the eyes give forth no sign,
And mute and cold the form I held so dear ;
And chill as hopeless grief or shapeless fear
The mist that spreads between her soul and mine;
Her eyes I see raised to the heavens clear,
But long in vain they should to me incline.

PART III
Love and Art

THE TEN YEARS

DANTE in sorrow waited ten long years,
Ere Beatricë rose before his sight ;
Dante through Hell toiled one long day and night,
For her sweet sake felt all its pains and fears ;
I also waited ten long weary years,
Toiled through a Hell, on which was seen no light,
No ray of hope my service to requite
To soothe my longing or assuage my tears.

For Art I strove, by her alone I sought
The thirsting anguish of my soul to drown ;
But ah ! how vain each triumph that she brought,
How poor the prospect of a great renown ;
Now Art seems small, and they themselves as
nought—

Those ten long years I waited for my Crown.

THE LADY'S "NO"

"No word," I said, "so long disclosed my heart
For fear that I unworthy should awake,
Thy answering love. It was for thy sweet sake
For ten long years I chose to dwell apart."
Then at my words I saw the swift dew start
And to her flower-like eyes its moisture take ;
"Hadst never thought," she said, "that mine
might break,
That thou alone my Monarch wert and art ?"

"And didst thou love," I cried, "those years ago,
Love me as now those ten long years before ?"
Swift as a shooting star there fell her "No,
Not as I love thee now I loved of yore ;
Dear Love, dear Life, I never loved thee so,
By those ten years I love thee ten times more."

THE LADY'S JEWELS

WHAT shall I give the lady I adore ?
Not opals, in those mystic colours deep
A still unwakened spirit seems to sleep ;
Nor em'rals, for now jealousy no more
Can wake those pangs which erstwhile once I
 bore,
Their cold green glitter makes my flesh to creep ;
Nor pearls, like tears which guardian angels
 weep,
For pearls my Lady ere she loved me wore.

Rubies I choose as drops from passion's well,
Rubies aflame, yet in whose ruddy hue
Lie still pure depths like spirits strong and true,
And diamonds with them, in whose waters dwell
That light and purity by which she drew
My soul beside hers from the depths of Hell.

ATTAINMENT

Thus Love and Art are wedded soul to soul,
And as twin stars on my horizon shine,
My Art is Love's and Love is wholly mine,
Through both my spirit quickened is and whole ;
Now have I found a double crown and goal
Each partly human more than part divine,
Each greater as the two in one combine,
And closer merging as they onward roll.

O Love ! O Art ! and thou of both the queen !
Before thy presence hidden things are clear,
Now fades before mine eyes the fleshly screen,
Now Heaven itself with all its joys are near ;
And now the angels' wings are almost seen
And now the music of the spheres I hear.

CONSUMMATION

SHE came to me, Love shining in her eyes,
Her hands outstretched as though for mine they
 sought,
And lo ! her brow seemed crowned with loftiest
 thought,
Her lips half-parted as with mild surprise.
She came to me—O Love ! not otherwise
Thy fairest gift had unto me been brought ;
But now the fetters of this earth are nought,
With wings unfurled I feel my spirit rise

To mix with hers in one close soul-embrace
Nearer yet nearer, till at last my Sweet
Hath crowned my life with all her angel-grace,
And at the touch by which our spirits meet
My life, my all, in those fair hands I place,
And Art herself lies prostrate at Love's feet.

LOVE LYRICS

AFFINITY

WE met soul to soul and we loved,
We parted, but not as of yore,
Somewhere in the universe wide
I know I shall find her once more.

Her heart was of passion the flower,
Her soul was of fire and of snow,
Her voice like the musical sound
When the streams on the hills overflow.

Her eyes were the blue of the sky
When the dawn whispers Hope to the sea ;
We met soul to soul and we loved,
And now she is taken from me.

She is taken from me, but I know,
I know and I cease to repine ;
For we met soul to soul and we loved
And her spirit is waiting for mine.

COULD I FORGET

AH ! could I but forego the pain
Which fills my life with sad regret,
Could I but live one hour again ;
Could I forget, could I forget.

Could I forget one face, one voice
Those visions which my soul beset,
Then only then, might I rejoice ;
Could I forget, could I forget.

Could I forget that bitter hour,
Of fruitless scorn when last we met,
Which crushed my passion in its flower ;
Could I forget, could I forget.

Could aught once heal that heartless blow
From which my soul is aching yet,
Which turned life's sunshine into snow ;
Could I forget, could I forget.

Could I Forget

41

Alas ! could I that hour forget,
Then should I be no longer I,
The shadow of that vain regret
Must haunt my spirit till I die ;
 Could I forget !

HAD I BUT KNOWN

THE wild waves hasten to the sea,
The ground with autumn leaves is strewn,
And still the cry comes back to me,
Had I but known ; had I but known.

Above the curlews sweep and fly,
I hear their note of mournful tone,
And still my sad heart makes reply,
Had I but known ; had I but known.

Had I but known we two had stood
Together now, Love, side by side,
Alas ! for Fate's remorseless flood
Which swept thee from me on its tide.

Which swept thee from me on the main
To where life's waves unceasing moan,
And left my heart its fruitless pain ;
Had I but known ; had I but known.

THE MIST OF MORNING

ACROSS the fragrant meadow,
While all the world's asleep,
I see a mist transparent,
Arise and upward creep.

It rises ever higher,
A mist so pure and white,
The early breath of morning
Which chases hence the night.

Oh ! Darling, thus thy spirit
Breathes o'er this life of mine,
So pure, so white, so fragrant,
A breath of the Divine.

I LOVE THY SPIRIT

I LOVE thy dainty hands, dear,
I love thy tiny feet,
But 'tis thy gentle spirit
I love the best, my Sweet.

I love thy eyes so steadfast
So clear and deep and true ;
Because 'tis there, my Darling,
Thy spirit shineth through.

I love thy pure red lips, Love,
Which press themselves on mine,
Because by them, my Dearest,
My spirit touches thine.

I love the gentle body
I clasp close to my breast ;
But, oh ! my Life, my Dear One,
I love thy spirit best.

I USED TO DREAD

I USED to dread the pain
Which you could make me feel ;
I hedged my soul with thorns,
And fenced it in with steel.

I used to dread my pain
But now your love I know,
A deeper dread is mine,
I fear a greater woe.

I used to dread my pain
But now I fear instead,
Lest I to you should bring
One pang of pain or dread.

I WOULD I WERE A COMET

I would I were a comet
And you, dear Love, a star ;
I'd whirl you in my orbit,
I'd bear you hence afar.

We'd leave the moon and planets,
We'd flash past many a sun,
And ever burn the brighter
The more we merged in one.

And on through starry spaces,
Together would we speed ;
Well may I not a comet be
And you my star indeed !

THOU WERT TO ME A POET

THOU wert to me a poet
Though ne'er a line you wrote,
A maker of sweet music
Though ne'er you struck a note.

Nature with all her voices
Speaks to my soul of thee,
Art which my soul rejoices
Brings thoughts of you to me.

Thou wert to me a poet,
To poesy's true sphere,
On wings of Love you bear me
My Life, my Love, my Dear.

THOU ART TO ME LIKE MUSIC

THOU art to me like music,
Some passionate sweet strain ;
You stir my soul to rapture,
You touch each cord of pain.

And now I melt in laughter
And now I fain would weep,
Now throb with all life's gladness,
Now gently drop to sleep.

Thou art to me like music,
Yet never music woke
Such passionate sweet rapture
As that which you evoke.

YOU ARE LIKE SUMMER LIGHTNING

You are like summer lightning
So pure, so clear, so bright ;
You flash upon my darkness,
You drive away my night.

You gleam on my horizon,
My world with light you fill ;
I feel you throb and quiver,
My very soul you thrill.

Your flashes play around me
Till moon and stars grow pale,
And Heaven seems to open
With angels crying Hail !

And now you're pale and golden,
Now bright and red you glow ;
Now touch the earth, next moment
To Heaven seem to go.

You are like summer lightning,
But soon that fades away,
And, Darling, you for ever
Shall with my spirit stay.

A LOST PAST

HAD I but caught one glimmer from your soul
That day you crushed mine down with iron hand ;
Had I but rightly read your self-control,
Half guessed what now I fully understand ;

Had I but known, our spirits then had kissed,
My heart had then been prostrate at your feet ;
What matter, Love, for from that past we missed
Has grown a present which is still more sweet.

THAT DAY

THAT Day you came to me with blinding tears,
And at one touch I saw your life unroll,
That Day which cleared from sight the clouds of
years,
That Day we stood together soul to soul.

That Day I learnt the purpose of my life,
That Day first understood its joy and pain,
Tasted the conquest which rewards the strife,
And felt God's sunshine at my heart again.

That Day you placed two crowns upon my brow,
Lover and Poet realised at last ;
Dear Love, dear Life, how small, how trivial now
Appears each sorrow from the wiped-out past !

SONGS OF ANGELS

THE ANGEL'S GIFT

UNTO a weary mortal,
An Angel once there came,
And said, "What shall I bring to you?"
He answered "Love and Fame."

Both gifts the Angel gave to him,
But yet he was unblest;
"Choose thou," said he, "my gifts for me,
Thou knowest what is best."

To this the Angel answered:
"Pause yet; wouldst thou refrain
Because the gifts which I would give
Are fraught with deepest pain?"

The mortal said, "I trust thee;"
"Then take from Heaven above,"
The Angel said, "Poetic Fire,
And endless power *to love*."

THE SERAPH STRAYED

God placed in the poet's hand a lyre,
All ready tuned and with golden strings,
And his brow He crowned with a crown of fire,
And his shoulders girt with an angel's wings.

God gave him a lyre and a place near the throne,
And the angels were standing expectant by,
But the notes he struck were false in tone,
And he sank to earth from his promise high.

He sang for gain, he sang for man,
While for him the angels in Heaven prayed,
And a shudder through all the spheres there ran
To think a seraph so far had strayed.

He lay at last alone in the dust,
The mists extinguished the crown of fire,
His hand could no more the lyre adjust,
His wings were hidden by grime and mire.

Had he chosen he might a song have sung
The whole of the universe to thrill,
An echo of God's own music rung
To proclaim his triumph and conquer ill.

God gave the lyre, He placed the crown,
The angels were waiting to hear the song,
But the poet brought the music down
To the unclean things which to earth belong.

So the seraph strayed, and the broken strings
And the crown extinguished still proclaim,
The story of one who with angel's wings,
Chose to strike for earth and an earthly fame.

THE TWO CROWNS

Two guardian Angels were looking down
On two mortals wending their way below,
O'er either forehead they held a crown,
Of purple blossom and flakes of snow.

One saw his crown as it gleamed afar,
And hailed its beauty with wild delight ;
And lo ! as he stretched his hand to a star,
He fell uncrowned in an earthly fight.

The other saw no crown, no gain,
No light for her in the sky above,
Through a dreary night of doubt and pain,
She followed a whisper which bade her love.

And unknown to herself her fight was won,
And the Angel's eyes with joy were wet ;
As there rang through Heaven the words " Well
done ! "
And lo ! on her forehead her crown was set.

GOD'S SMALLEST ANGEL

GOD made this world an Eden,
But suff'ring entered in,
Brought by the kindred spirits,
Man's self-will and his sin.

Then God looked down in pity,
And from the far-off skies
He sent six radiant Angels
To bid man's sad heart rise.

The first was crowned with roses,
And on her breast of snow
A sparkling, brilliant ruby
Was seen to flash and glow ;

Her eyes were dark and tender,
And shone like stars above,
She held a golden sceptre—
This Angel's name was Love.

The next who came was Sorrow,
Crowned with sad purple flowers,
Who in her hand bore waters
Of wondrous cleansing powers.

And after her came Virtue,
A sword of bright renown
Was carried in her right hand,
And in her left a crown.

And then there followed Genius,
She bore a sword of flame,
And golden rays of glory
Behind her presence came.

And then one crowned with cypress,
Who held a key of gold,
Who slowly moved and sadly,
Whose touch was chill and cold.

And close behind this Angel,
By men misnamed Death,
One crowned with white and scarlet,
The gentle Angel Faith.

Yet still men's hearts were heavy,
With eyes bent to the ground
They failed to see the Angels
Whose presence hovered round

And then God's smallest Angel
He chose to come to earth.
She had not Love's grand presence,
Nor Sorrow's cleansing worth.

She had nor sword nor sceptre,
Nor wreath nor crown she wore,
Only the sweetest music
Her footsteps went before,

And echoed all around her
With such a glad, sweet strain,
That grief before it vanished,
And men forgot their pain.

Her hair was like a sunbeam,
Her lips of ruby hue,
Her eyes shone like the sapphire,
As brilliant and as blue.

She passed with gentle footsteps
Down many a crowded street,
Men wondered at the sunshine
And at the fragrance sweet.

Her hand was soft and tender
Like flakes of falling snow,
On aching hearts she laid it,
And healing seemed to flow.

She is God's Smallest Angel,
And often those who try
To walk with Love or Genius
Will pass this Angel by.

And those who follow Virtue,
And strive to win her crown,
Will stand on heights above her,
And in their pride look down.

Unknown to those around her,
She walks this earth of ours,
Unrecognised in cities
Or wand'ring midst the flowers.

But when her work is finished
She'll stand before the Throne,
As high as Faith and Virtue,
Lower than Love alone.

THE ANGEL'S CROWN

Two Angels walked down a narrow street,
A narrow street in an earthly town,
They were sent to earth from their heav'nly seat
To seek a halo and gain a crown.

One in the dust they passed lay prone,
With tattered raiment and flowing hair,
Her feet were bleeding from briar and stone,
Her wounded breast to the winds lay bare.

One angel said, " Not near I go,
For fear that my spotless robe I stain ;"
The other paused, for the woman's woe
He heard in a smothered sob of pain.

One passed on his way down the narrow street
With gathered garments of spotless hue,
The other knelt by the woman's feet,
His robe o'er the prostrate figure threw.

* * * * *

When their Father's House once more they gained,
One was spotless, white, and fair,
The other's robe was torn and stained ;
And they knelt together and waited there.

There came a spirit of radiant mien,
To the one it whispered, " Stay where you are,
The road which is always smooth and clean
Will gain no halo and reach no star."

Then it took the robe which the other wore,
It kissed each stain, it touched each rent,
And the stains and rents were there no more,
Into gems and garlands behold them blent.

" Yours is the halo and yours the crown,"
It said, " by the Love you to me revealed,
'Twas for me you were sent from Heaven down ;
I am the Woman whose Wounds you Healed."

THE SMALL WHITE SIN

THE woman had sinned a little sin
Full many years gone by,
And the place could no longer hope to win
Which should have been hers on high.

For the little sin that once seemed small
She knew would at last arise,
And stand like a mighty threatening wall
Twixt her soul and Paradise.

As she thought of her sin she wept and wept,
The sin sinned long before ;
At the sound of her tears it rose and crept
Till it came to Heav'n's door.

"O Angels," it said, "O Heav'nly Host,
Down on the earth you see
A woman her hope of Heaven has lost,
And all because of me."

"Came you of Lust?" the Angels said.

It said, "Nay, 'twas not so."

"Of Fraud or Cruelty were you bred?"

Again it answered, "No!"

"Then small white sin, say whence you came,

If not from Fraud or Lust."

"O Angels," it said, "more great my shame,

I was born of Love and Trust."

"And how," they said, "is your garment white,

If you are indeed a sin?"

"The tears of the woman have cleansed it quite,

And I am to Virtue akin."

"Oh! little sin, oh! sin in white,

Oh! sin with the pleading eyes,

Since the woman's tears have cleansed you quite,

You shall enter Paradise."

When the woman came to the golden door,

Behold it was standing wide,

And the little sin, a sin no more,

Awaited her inside.

THE FALLEN ANGEL

This poem was suggested to the writer by Mr. Waldo Story's piece of sculpture bearing the same name, and exhibited in the Summer Exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery, 1887.

ONE of God's Angels dwelt apart,
And 'mid the brilliant throng
Her voice alone refused to swell
The golden sea of song ;
Her wings were closed as buds are closed
When winds in March blow strong.

'Mid all the music of the spheres
Which through the ether float,
And send forth sparkling waves of praise
From every star remote,
To mingle with the Angels' song,
She heard one minor note.

Through all the mystic golden haze
Of God's translucent air,
Through light where shadow never falls,
Down many a golden stair,
She saw the little earth below,
And sin and sorrow there.

At length unto the Father's throne
She crept in sore distress,
"Father, 'mid all Thy worlds," she said,
"One Thou hast failed to bless ;
To one hast given sin and pain—
Omitted happiness.

"The other spheres revolve in light
And see their Father's face,
The other spheres Thou dost not fail
To bless with Thine own grace ;
But little earth Thou leav'st alone
Her toilsome way to trace."

The Father gazed in pity down
On His complaining child.
"Yet even there My light may fall,
Sometimes with radiance mild,
And angel-songs may pierce the gloom,"
He said to her and smiled,

“ But since thou failest to perceive
 My guiding rays so far,
And since thou think'st one minor strain
 Celestial concords mar,
Thou shalt thyself go down and dwell
 Where men and women are.

“ And thou shalt see the sin and pain
 Which yet thou canst not know,
Amid the paths which men must tread,
 Thy heaven-wont feet shall go ;
Bearing through all that may defile
 Thy garment pure as snow.

“ And this the work I give to thee,
 And this shall be thy quest,
To learn why out of all the worlds
 Which seem to Thee more blest
I choose as Mine this little earth
 And prize and love it best.”

In wond'ring awe the Angel stood,
 Then lo ! her wings unfurled,
Gently she flew to Heaven's gate,
 Whence Lucifer was hurled ;
Then through the starry courses sped
 Until she reached the world.

* * * *

An Angel knelt at Heaven's gate
With bruised and drooping wings,
And garments spotless now no more,
But stained with earthly things,
And bleeding hand which beats the door
Or to the threshold clings.

"O God," she cried, "I did not know
When earth held out such joy
That in the sparkling cup were draughts
That purity destroy,
That Love's embrace could soil my robe,
And angel-pinions cloy.

"It was so lonely on the earth,"
She said, and tears fell warm,
"And Love came in with magic touch
The whole world to transform ;
He stirred my heart as treetops stir
By breath of coming storm.

He swayed me as the summer wind
A field of corn will sway,
My heart was thawed as ice-drops thaw
Beneath the sun's warm ray ;
Love filled my hungry soul and chased
My loneliness away.

"O God ! by gloom of little earth
I was no more oppressed,
Methought Thy greatest gift was there,
And I had found my quest ;
I let Love in to dwell with me—
Thou knowest, God, the rest."

But still the golden gate was barred,
And still she knelt before,
With blinding tears and bleeding hands,
Still knelt at Heaven's door.
"Once fallen," she in anguish cried,
"God, may I rise no more ?"

And there through all the night she lay,
Her tears shone as a star
Which from the violet pall around
Gleamed silvery afar.
She knew it not, but lay and moaned
Against the golden bar.

"Why did I murmur when in Heaven,
And doubt God's mercy wide,
Why did I ever leave my home
To tread the earth ?" she cried.
She knew it not but on that earth
Men said, "An Angel sighed !"

And lo ! she did not see a form
Which o'er her gently bent,
She did not know that one stood near
By God her Father sent,
Until a voice as clarion clear
The ambient air had rent.

"Your tears have washed your garment white,
Your sighs have stirred the air,
They seemed as music unto men
And unto God a prayer,
"The gate," it said, "is wide for you,
Angels thy place prepare.

"And God has seen thy penitence
And granted thee thy quest ;
Forgiveness is His greatest gift,
He loves the weakest best.
And those who turn to Him for aid
By Him are doubly blest.

"To all the angels who revolve
With songs around His Throne,
The priceless gift He sends to you
Must ever be unknown ;
The bond which binds Him to the earth
Is thine in Heaven alone."

The Angel gazed upon his face,
 " O Love," she said, "'tis thine !"
Softly the other made reply,
 " Not earthly, but Divine ;"
She entered then, and through God's worlds
 New glory seemed to shine.

THE SOUL'S CHOICE

THEY loved on earth, the stream of life
Between their souls had rushed,
And one had fallen in the strife,
And one had evil crushed.

The gulf between had there gaped wide,
But Love can ne'er forget,
And where Death rolls its further tide
Once more their spirits met ;

And soul to soul, and heart to heart
With ne'er a fleshly screen,
They stood where Death no more can part
Nor Life sweep in between.

And evermore thought thus to stay,
Till, slowly drawing nigh,
They saw an Angel wing his way
With judgment from on high.

"Apart, apart," he cried in ire,
"Nor think to meet again,
For one awaits unquenched fire
And never-ending pain.

"The other spirit shall abide
Where light and joy are given ;
For it the gates of gold stand wide,
A place awaits in Heaven."

The lovers knelt with grief dismayed
And anguish racked each heart ;
"Together let us be," they prayed,
"We cannot rest apart.

"We ask no other boon but this,
That we as one may dwell,
In union is our only bliss,
In separation Hell."

"Nay," said the Angel, "'tis decreed,
And it can never be
The Heaven which is the victor's mead
The vanquished too should see !

"But though thy soul may not rejoice
Where endless glories glow
She who may enter has the choice,
Instead to Hell to go.

"Behold and choose !" He waved his spear,
And lo ! before their eyes
The Heav'n they wish the Hell they fear
In vision clear arise.

The spirit wavered, but a sound
Then echoed through the air,
And in one sigh of anguish bound
Her lover's last despair.

And hearing she exultant said,
"No Heaven my soul can know,
If for my lover hope be dead,
To Hell I choose to go."

Again the Angel spake, "Thy choice
O Soul," it said, "is well ;
Better to let thy love have voice
Than in delight to dwell.

"Thy lover thou hast saved by this,
The joy of Heaven above
Is ever thine, is ever his,
There is no Hell with Love."

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

TRANSCENDENTALISM

I STOOD apart upon a lofty peak
Whose summit bore a crown of dazzling snow,
Here could not reach me from the world below
The mad unrest of souls which strive and seek,
Love's throbbing whisper, or Ambition's shriek,
The sound of seas where passions ebb and flow ;
Mine was the dawn, and mine the sunset's glow,
And mine the secret which the mountains keep.

But ah ! the silence, for the rise and swell
Of human heart-beats reached my soul no more ;
The aridness ! no seedling ever fell
And nurture found upon that summit hoar ;
The solitude !—beneath it mortals dwell
And far above the wingèd creatures soar !

STAGNATION

I stood within a city : it was night ;
Nor could I see till dawn's first rays were shed
Its denizens as those whom Death had wed ;
Here grinning skeletons arose to sight,
Here, waveless waters, phosphorescent light,
And when I cried aloud my own voice fed
The voiceless echoes, crying, " Dead, and dead ! "
To soulless shapes and tombstones gaunt and
white.

And when I sought to drink, the waters deep
Sent deathly torpors creeping through my frame,
And when I strove the evil things to keep
From crawling o'er me, numbness overcame ;
And no tears rose though I was fain to weep.
Beware that place ; Stagnation is its name.

SCHILLER

A GOLDEN glory from the sky o'erhead,
Great sparkling draughts from Poesy's deep well,
Which run in amber streams o'er dale and fell,
And on the meads translucent waters shed,
A sense of wings, by which the soul is led
To heights where pure refreshing breezes swell,
A voice as clear as thine own song-forged bell,
From those far peaks where lofty thoughts are
bred.

Such my environment, thus it is I feel
O Schiller, stirred by thy deep clarion note ;
The golden glow of rapture seems to steal
Upon the soul from where thou dwell'st remote,
And from the actual to the far ideal
On waves of song I gently onward float.

GOETHE

WILD winds which sweep in gusts across the lea,
And beat upon the towering mountain-side,
With giant steps the torrents deep bestride
And stir the woods and lash the brooding sea,
Wild winds which range the whole world strong
and free,
With tempests rife upon the darkness ride,
Then sink to rest till scarce to be descried
In gentle breeze and plaintive melody.

Goethe, great master, unto thee were lent
Nature, the human heart, thy touch awoke
Majestic music from thy instrument,
The silent depths thou didst to song evoke,
Within thy soul were love and genius blent,
And passion's sea in waves poetic broke.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

SURELY, great soul, thou didst not stand on earth
Nor view the world with eyes of little men,
Thou saw'st depths too deep for mortal ken,
Life bared to thee her secret aim and worth,
Thy vision pierced beyond the narrow girth
That binds the souls which earthly shackles pen,
Truth dropped her veil before thy glance, and then
Thy genius gave titanic visions birth.

And in thy work I see no mortal hand,
Nor yet methinks could lifeless chisel form
Those figures in their incompleteness grand,
In coldness of their marble prison warm.
As Jove with thunderbolts didst thou not stand
And hurl the shapes from out thy spirit's storm?

FRA ANGELICO

WHAT glimpse of Heaven hadst thou, O artist-saint ?

What harmonies sublime fell on thy soul,
What secret raptures o'er thy spirit stole
And purified thee from all earthly taint ?
Did not the heavens ope, the world grow faint,
And all the spheres before thy vision roll,
Till thou beheldst the ransomed, pure and whole,
And with their songs celestial were acquaint ?

Surely thou trodest where the angels tread,
And heard the echoes in God's sacred aisle,
Ere thou couldst paint the radiance round each
head,
The faces breathing with celestial smile,
The angel-forms, by which our hearts are led
To that far home they have but left erewhile.

FLORENCE AT SUNSET

FLORENCE, I see thee circled by thy flowers,
Above Carrara rears his bastions white,
And purple shades dye Vallombrosa's height,
As setting to thy ancient domes and towers.
Beauty is thine ; thy loveliness o'erpowers
My soul with longings vague and infinite ;
Thy noon is ended, but the waning light
Is left to thee by day's reluctant hours.

The air is still, and vap'rous mists are shed
Upon thy Lily-Tower, Art's fairest dream,
And domes and palaces are bathed in red,
And 'neath its bridges glistens Arno's stream :
Now wingèd night creeps softly overhead,
And from afar behold one planet gleam.

LONDON

LONDON, not thine the charm of golden beams,
Where southern sunshine gilds the ambient air ;
Not thine the fatal gift of beauty rare,
Of mountain crowns, gemmed with translucent
 streams ;
Yet thou hast too thy magic ; thou hast gleams
Of saffron glories, and of vistas fair,
Of purple domes and stately towers, now bare,
Now veiled in mists, which fade like morning
 dreams.

And to thy lovers thou dost charms unfold
Of deeper beauty, majesty most sweet ;
Beneath thy sable robes and features cold
They find a heart afire with passion's heat ;
And on thy pale, sad forehead they behold
A crown where strife and aspiration meet.

VITA IN MORTE

[BROMPTON CHURCHYARD, JUNE, 1896.]

A CHURCHYARD where the grass trailed wild and
long,

And in their earthy homes the headstones sank
Half-hidden by the mosses green and dank,
While summer sunshine made each shadow
strong ;

Then lo ! the happy sounds of childish song,
And youthful laughter, fearless, free, and frank,
And hast'ning o'er the graves with merry prank
They took unheeding way, a careless throng.

So we, the children of a later day,
Dance on the graves of buried hopes and fears ;
O'er long-lost loves, green with the moss of years,
And mould'ring griefs we raise our laughter gay ;
And at it all the golden sunshine peers,
Mingling with death, and mocking at decay.

TO A CHILD

DEAR Child, who cam'st when all my life seemed
dark,

Clad in sweet innocence, unconscious grace,
The sunlight cast reflection on thy face,
Thy piping voice was clearer than the lark ;
Thou wast God's messenger, a little ark
Where all most pure and sacred found a place ;
No thought impure on thee had left a trace,
Thy soul was sullied by no evil mark.

Thou led'st my spirit, with thy gentle hand
So weak, yet strong in purity's great might,
Until once more my weary feet could stand
Where fragrant meadows clothe the mountain
height ;

And like a mist which wraps the marshy land
Life's surging passions faded out of sight.

FRIENDSHIP

I HAD a friend who in my willing ear
Poured eager words with adulation rife,
He healed the wound inflicted by truth's knife,
My faults glossed over, made my virtues clear ;
In those smooth seas he sought my soul to steer
Where self-esteem doth lead us far from strife,
I glided on content with self, with life ;
He loved me till I to myself grew dear.

Another came ; his presence seemed to send
A light in which my littleness lay bare,
He led me to a sea which tempests rend,
Where waves are efforts rising o'er despair ;
But earth seemed richer for a soul so rare,
Myself I loved no longer, but my Friend.

SORROW

I MET pale Sorrow crowned with heavy care ;
She stood, and with her presence barred my way ;
Her shadow made the path seem cold and grey,
The sun was hidden by her dusky hair ;
She bent o'er me, and chill hands seemed to tear
My heart in twain submitting to her sway ;
She took my gems and left the common clay ;
She stripped my life till all its boughs were bare.

Then bade me follow ; I, impelled, arose,
And trod the path where she was wont to wend ;
At length she said, "Our journey here may end,"
And moved behind, by moving to disclose
The view below, where lights and shadows blend,
And overhead the pure, eternal snows.

SUCCESS

THE surging multitude held out a crown,
And all the air with noisy tumult woke,
Laughed if I smiled, heard humbly when I spoke,
And at my feet as sycophants knelt down ;
My lightest word was echoed through the town,
My smallest deed high plaudits would evoke,
While round me swarmed a crowd of servile folk ;
And this was Fame—this was the world's Renown.

I was alone ; with gibes and scoffing sneers
Had vanished from me all that wind-blown press ;
I spake the truth ; men therefore loved me less ;
Then one drew near and washed my feet with
tears,
And laid before me all her conquered fears,
And crowned my soul with laurels of Success.

LIFE

THE surging, vast illimitable ages
Bear us as waves to Time's foam-fretted shore,
We hear behind the elemental roar,
The conflict which nor life nor death assuages.
Our names are written on recording pages,
Which all, full soon, are palimpsest once more,
The past with all its closely heaped-up store,
The empty future are our heritages.

For one brief day our parent waters leave
Us on their rocky margin known as life ;
Round us a thousand subtle forces weave
Their binding chains with complex passions rife,
Then once again those mighty billows heave,
And bear us thence to depths too deep for strife.

DEATH

DEATH ! is it thou who longing souls dost free
From fleshly prisons ? Is it thy chill dart
Which rives the body and the soul apart
And launches spirits on Eternity ?
Nay, is it thou who on that boundless sea
From life's great harbours doth the vessels start ?
Not Death, thou a releasing Angel art
Who leadest souls where they desire to be.

But when our aspirations droop pale wing
And sink in torpor to this little earth ;
When caged Hope no more her song will sing,
And Love is dumb and mute the lips of Faith,
When to the corpse of some dead past we cling,
This, oh ! my soul, this, this alone is Death.

MISCELLANEOUS LYRICS

EFFORT

'Tis not enough to tune the lyre
And wait for harmonies to come,
God sendeth not celestial fire
Where human hearts are cold and numb.

'Tis not enough to calmly wait
That quickening dew should on us fall,
To vaguely long for what is great
While still pursuing what is small.

'Tis not enough with tears of woe
To pity all the world's distress ;
The drops that from inaction flow
Nor us nor other lives will bless.

'Tis not enough the love to take
Which other hearts on ours outpour ;
The soul is only kept awake
By giving something from its store.

'Tis not enough with drooping wing
And aimless feet to tread the earth ;
Effort alone will blessing bring .
And crown the soul with sovereign worth.

TO B. M. G.

DEAR first awakener of my youthful soul,
Do you remember how in days gone by
We loved to dream and watch the great clouds roll
Across the dark blue spaces of the sky ?

Do you remember how we used to tread
The meadowland when all the air grew still,
And one by one the stars shone overhead
While faint appeared the outline of each hill ?

Fair was the scene, our hearts untouched by care,
Unwakened yet to life's sad undertone,
Found fitting medium in that golden air,
The world was filled with music of our own.

And still beneath our love of later days
Thy welcome presence to my spirit seems
Touched with the glory of life's early rays,
Stirred by the music of youth's happy dreams.

With you there passes gently out of sight
The mists of life, its tumult and its pain,
Once more the air seems filled with golden light,
The stars are shining overhead again.

WEEP NOT FOR ME

AH ! do not weep for me when I am dead,
Lest looking down
Each drop of anguish that I see you shed
Should dim my crown ;

And like a mist I think your tears would rise
And dim your sight,
So that half-blinded on your longing eyes
Would fall no light.

Nay, when I look from that far home on you,
I'd see you smile,
And know that you still held the promise true,
" A little while."

WHAT MY LOVE DEMANDS

If even then, my dearest, I had died,
Then when you thought me cold,
I would have waited for you still outside
The far-off gates of gold.

I would have knelt upon the steps alone,
Wept and entreated there,
Until the very angels next the Throne
Had ceased their songs to hear.

If they had said, "Perchance it is not meant
That both in Heaven should be,"
I would have said, "Then best to Hell be sent
No Heav'n alone for me!"

Rather than enter in yourself before,
Outside with blinding tears
I would have watched and waited at that door
For countless years and years.

And if at last the Angels in our face,
 In yours and mine, dear Love,
Had closed the door and banished us from grace
 And all the joys above,

I would have beaten with my clenched hands
 Against that golden door,
Until the Angel that within it stands
 Had opened it once more.

And if he bade me choose for which the fate
 I should have joyful said,
“Here at the entrance of all joy I’ll wait
 If she within be lead.”

A DREAM OF ITALY

(IN REPLY TO A LETTER.)

THE sun of Italy, you feel,
At thought of me arise !
Oh ! happy I to bring to you
Dreams of those azure skies.

And at the words by fancy led
Once more I seem to roam
In those fair lands where Love and Art
Together find their home.

I see the sunset touch with flame
Bologna's twisted towers,
Or from Fiesole look down
On Florence and her flowers.

Or better still, as I can choose,
I roam again with you
Whose dream-like mountains melt in space
Round Como's waters blue.

Each detail of that fairy scene
In thought I can recall,
The dainty toadflax, ivy-leaved,
That decks the mould'ring wall ;

The lizards basking in the sun,
The crickets' shrill delight,
The fireflies which like sparks of fire
Dance in the air at night ;

And on the rocks like snowy spikes
The saxifrages bloom ;
While messages are wafted by
From eglantine and broom.

I hear the waves lap on the shore
With tender silv'ry sound,
The ferns I see, the very stones
Of that enchanted ground.

And once again upon the lake
With you I gently float,
While those ideals which we seek
No longer seem remote.

O Italy ! thou dost indeed
To realms of Love belong,
Thy very air is redolent
Of passion and of song.

The vision fades ; the fact remains,
Which nothing can undo,
That once I had for one whole week,
Both Italy and you !

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

HE.

Do you remember how last year
We parted where we first had met,
The sky was amber overhead,
The sun seemed waiting ere he set ?

We watched it fade, our hearts the while
Held silent discourse each with each,
The air seemed tremulous with love,
I dared not break the spell with speech.

We parted as the night came down,
And slowly blotted out the scene ;
It left me with a fruitless pain,
A longing for what might have been.

For you have married Lord Fitz-James,
Who writes his income with five figures ;
And I'm for Matabele bound,
To vent my spleen upon the niggers.

SHE.

Yes, I remember, for I thought
The time had come for you to speak ;
I feared lest I might answer " Yes,"
We women sometimes are so weak.

And glowing sky and golden air
Were like a part of love's young dream—
Were *like*, I say ; I pray you mark,
I speak of things that only seem.

For I have married Lord Fitz-James,
And by his worldly goods am blest ;
While you're for Matabele bound,
And—well, no doubt we each chose best.

BONDAGE

I THOUGHT I knew Love when the sunlight was
shining,

He came to my arms as a blithe, bonny boy,.
And while on my bosom his head was reclining
I recked not of sorrow, I dreamt but of joy.

So into my heart I received him right gaily,
The burden how light in that first happy hour ;
I still had to learn as I nourished him daily,
That Love though a pastime is also a power.

But when the storms gathered and summer had
perished,

When sorrow crept near me, and joy stole away,
I sought all in vain for the love I had cherished,
I found not my nursling so bonny and gay.

Then I heard a voice murmur, "I could not for-
sake thee

Who welcomed me first when the May was in
flower,

But choose if as master and lord you will take me,
For Love though a pastime is also a power !"

And then as a giant I beheld him before me,
He grasped me and freedom for ever went by,
And a sense half of joy, half of wonder stole o'er
me,
To find that my nursling was stronger than I.

So now as a captive to Love you behold me,
Who welcomed him first as a babe to my bower,
And I learn as the chains of sweet Bondage en-
fold me,
That Love though a pastime is also a power.

MY MUSE'S WOOER

I HAD a friend who tried my muse to woo,
Sat by her and flattered her, gently stroked her
wing ;
Told her of things most beautiful and true ;
All, all in vain ! My muse refused to sing.

I had a friend who cared not for my muse,
Cared not for her singing, cared alone for me ;
At this one's coming, lo ! she cannot choose,
But spread out her wings and all her song is free !

A SONG OF THE MOORS

1886,

COULD we go together,
You, my own, with me,
To the purple heather
And the deep blue sea.

Ah ! what happy days, dear,
You and I might spend,
Just with no one else near,
I and you, my Friend.

Hand in hand enlinking,
Hearts which each to each
Tell what souls are thinking,
Thoughts too deep for speech.

If we were together
Of a brighter hue
Would seem sea and heather
And the sky so blue.

And the stars which nightly
Shine from Heaven above,
Still would shine more brightly
For our happy love.

Perfect would my peace be,
Hushed my spirit's moan ;
We should be so happy,
You and I alone.

Could we go together,
You, my own, with me,
To the purple heather
And the deep blue sea

THE LAUREATE'S DEATH

"Lord Tennyson has had a gloriously beautiful death. In all my experience I have never witnessed anything more glorious. There were no artificial lights in the chamber, and all was in darkness save for the moon at its full. The soft beams of light fell upon the features of the dying poet like a halo of Rembrandt."—SIR ANDREW CLARK (quoted in papers of the period).

NIGHT was illumined, and no touch of gloom
Obscured the moonlight's calm, majestic ray,
When from the confines of earth's little room,
Thy soul, oh ! princely poet, pass'd away.

Upon thy noble brow a halo shone
Fairer than laurels of an earthly crown ;
Earth's lights were dim, and from the sky alone
The radiance of the moon came sweeping down.

Oh, fitting emblem of thy well-lived life,
Who taught to man the mission of the soul,
Who sought and found beyond this earthly strife
The everlasting peace which is its goal.

Who saw beyond the tumult and the fight,
The time when hatred and when wars shall
 cease,
Reflecting from thy soul the heaven-born light
Of highest wisdom and profoundest peace.

What though the glory here revealed to thee
Hath claimed thee now, and, Poet, thou art there,
Thou hast not left us, stars and rolling sea,
All that thou loved'st thy presence still declare.

THE POETS' JOY

" 'Tis from our sorrows that we learn to raise,"
So poets say, " our song,"
But yet methinks the merit and the praise
Should more to joy belong.

Groping our way through many mists and fears,
We knowledge learn from pain,
But from our joy and from the word she bears,
Knowledge more true we gain.

How could we rightly gauge the clouds and mist
If we had never seen
The mountain peaks by light of morning kissed,
Nor evening skies serene !

The truest eye sees furthest through the gloom,
And notes while still afar,
The Angel waiting by the empty tomb,
In darkest nights some star.

All can behold in life the grief and pain,
They on the surface lie,
But visions of eternal joy to gain
May need a poet's eye.

Deep in the bosom of all art should glow
Some reflex of God's smile,
Pain ev'ry artist in his soul should know
Can last but for a while.

But broken wavelets in a sea of light,
Within whose depths are found
Illimitable depths of glory bright
Where endless joys abound.

EVOLUTION

FIRST there soared the Angel, then there crawled
the brute,
Then there stood forth man focussing the two ;
Now Creation pauses, yet while she is mute,
Each one born on earth the struggle must renew.

Elements would fuse, the furnace is the soul,
Angel with the brute and brute with Angel strives,
Each in turn he's curbing, neither can control—
'Tis the conflict makes the tragedy of lives.

Now the Angel crawls, see the brute's vile glee,
Now the brute would soar, Angel lends no wing ;
Ah ! if man could only conquer and be free,
Tread the brute beneath him, bid the Angel sing.

Then emerge as neither, Angel, brute, nor man,
Rise up as a fourth power from the three evolved,
Triumph thus Creation, thus complete her plan,
Conflict all be ended, problem all be solved.

THE LIGHT ON THE SUMMIT

A TRUE DREAM.

I HAD a dream in the night, my own,
Together we walked upon heights of snow,
Purple the shadows by ice-crag's thrown,
Blue were the depths of the pools below.

Together a distant peak we sought,
And a light I could feel but yet could not see ;
You fainted with cold, but I had no thought
Save of that summit for you and me.

I bore you up from height unto height,
Towards the distant peak and the light above ;
You lay in my arms, but your weight was light,
I bore you up by the force of Love.

Upward and upward still I sped,
Over the snow with my naked feet ;
No fear had I, I felt no dread,
Love lent me wings and my toil was sweet.

This was no dream, my own, it was true—
True that distant peak and the heights we trod
The night shall vanish for me and you,
And the Light on the summit be seen as God

THE ANGEL'S FLOWER

God sent the angels each a flower to make,
And o'er the earth they sped with eager wing,
Bidding all Nature from her sleep to wake,
Singing the songs which only angels sing.

Green leaves burst forth and rustled in the wind,
A verdant carpet spread beneath their feet,
A thousand voices seemed with theirs combined,
Yet bloomed no flower, and rose no fragrance
sweet.

Then some fetched fragments of the heavens
blue,
Forget-me-nots and gentian saw the light,
The glow of noonday—golden globe-flowers grew,
The sunset's flush and roses blushed to sight.

But while the others soared to realms above,
One on the earth found flakes of purest snow,
And kissing them with lips of tender love,
Beheld the first created snowdrop grow.

Then God decreed that 'mid the brilliant throng
The earthborn flower should be of Hope the
voice,
And thus when Spring seems late and Winter
long,
Its frail, fair blossom whispers still, Rejoice !

THE MOUNTAIN BREEZE

I RISE from my nest, where the glacier's crest
Is violet and turquoise and green,
And gently I glide down the mountain-side
And enter the dark ravine ;
Where the rocks are cleft and the chasms left
I spritelike pass unseen.

I chase the mist, which the meads have kissed,
Till it hastens away to the snow,
And the blossoms dance to the sun's warm glance
As I rock them to and fro.
Then away I speed like a fairy steed,
And leap the torrent below.

I kiss lover's lips, and the white-winged ships
I chase o'er the waters blue ;
I cool fever'd brows, the delicate boughs
Bend before me to rise up anew ;
I hide in the caves and sing to the waves,
And laugh as my kisses they woo.

Thus all the day I frolic and play
Till the moon hath unfolded her charms,
And the solemn pall of the evening fall
Hath filled me with vague alarms ;
Then I sink to sleep as I softly creep
To my rest in a mountain's arms.

THE MOUNTAIN STORM

THE Storm-wind arose and shook his form
Where mountain shadows lie thick and warm ;
Then down he swept through the forest glade.
The buds and blossoms grew all afraid,
For well they knew that the storm-wind's breath
Was fraught with omen of coming death.
One moment he paused in awful hush,
Then downward sped with a mighty rush ;
He tossed the stern pines to and fro
Till they bowed their heads in grief and woe ;
He lashed the stream in its stony home,
And its lucid waves grew white with foam.
And " Ah ha ! Ah ha ! " he laughed with pride,
" Chasms are deep and gulfs are wide,
But one and all can I bestride."

He sought the lake, and its waters grey
Sprang up towards him in angry spray.
" You are mine, are mine ! " he shrieked aloud,
And the lake made answer in murmurs proud.

- He took no heed of her mournful moan,
But claimed and seized her for all his own,
Sweeping her surface as harpists sweep
Strings of the harp for concord deep—
In her deepest depths did the proud lake weep.

Onward again he hurried by,
And reached a mountain stern and high.
He threw himself on its granite breast,
But the mountain frowned and stood at rest ;
Then back he drew, and howls of pain
Burst from his lips as he tried again,
And hurled himself on it, in vain, in vain.

For, lo ! King Sun now claimed his right,
The clouds rolled by from his touch of light,
While ev'ry tiny crag and spire
Were clothed with rays of sudden fire,
And the lake now wore a crown of gold
And in waves of amber triumphant rolled
And defied her wooer wild and bold.

Then the Storm-wind sank with a dirge-like moan
And died where the valley lay still and lone.

COMPENSATION .

GOD took my work, the nursling of my choice,
And from my aching arms it weeping bore ;
But in its place I heard a small still voice
And found a strength I had not known before.

He took my health, my power to do and dare,
And on a couch of pain I lay supine,
But ev'ry drop of anguish I shed there
He caused to bless another life than mine.

He took my Love, the fairest flower of all,
Which with its sweetness filled my night and day,
And one by one I watched its petals fall
And felt its early fragrance fade away.

He took them all, then gave them back once more,
And, lo ! they shone to my astonished eyes,
Bright with a lustre all unknown before
And crowned with dewdrops out of Paradise.

A WISH

I DO not ask that worldly gain
Should strew the path before thy feet,
Nor that thy lot be free from pain—
All noble souls must sorrow meet.

Nor do I ask that thou shouldst wear
The laurels of a great renown ;
Fame is a heavy wreath to bear,
And thorns have formed a nobler crown.

But this, my Friend, I ask for thee,
A lofty aim, a noble heart,
The strength to conquer and be free,
The power to rightly act thy part.

MY HEART'S INNER ROOM

My heart hath many chambers
And one open door ;
Those who once enter it
Leave it no more.

Some in the hall sit
Waiting for me,
Some each have chambers
No others see.

One sacred room dear
I kept all as mine ;
You came and claimed it
By right divine.

In that and all others
At will dost thou roam,
To thee all are open,
My heart is thy home.

THE PESSIMIST

HE climbed a peak all wrapt in snow,
And looked not at the view below.

He made him wings and tried their worth,
Who yet could hardly walk on earth.

To seek his treasure did he roam,
And left it all the while at home.

Before the swine his pearls he strewed,
Then cursed their base ingratitude.

He carefully shut out the light,
Then said, "The world is dark as night."

"And all," exclaimed, when this was done,
"Is vanity beneath the sun."

HOPES

GRIEVE not, O heart, for those fond hopes
Which faded ere the spring was born,
Like snowflakes on the mountain slopes
Which catch the light of early dawn.

Grieve not for thy dead hopes !

Grieve not though gentle hands touched thine
And smoothed thy path which are no more,
Like stars which in the heavens shine
And pass from sight when night is o'er.

Grieve not for thy dead hopes !

Ah ! grieve not though the past be dead,
That golden past thou once didst prize,
Though heights thou thoughtest once to tread
Have faded from thy longing eyes.

Grieve not for thy dead hopes !

Grieve not ! the snow which melted here
Now sparkles in the rainbow's crown,
The stars which seemed to disappear
On other worlds are looking down.

Grieve not for thy dead hopes !

The heights which seemed so near to climb
When by the light of morning kiss'd
Still rear their crags and peaks sublime,
Though veiled before thee in the mist.

Grieve not for thy dead hopes !

And thy dead hopes shall rise again
To greet thy spirit in the land
Where Love is purified from pain
And Faith and Truth wait hand in hand.

Grieve not for thy dead hopes !

ENVOY

EACH plaintive note made by the flute
Amid the orchestra, though sweet,
Is scarcely heard, yet if once mute
The music would be incomplete.

Each wave that beats against the rock,
And spends itself in empty spray,
Seems wasted, yet in time the shock
Has helped to wear the cliff away.

Each little soul that loveth still,
Through joy, through pain, through grief,
through mirth,
That trusteth through all show of ill,
Hath brought God's heaven nearer earth.

Each little book straight from the heart,
Though not by it may fame be brought,
Some answ'ring chord may serve to start
And find the guerdon that it sought.

Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row, London.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

In square 8vo, price 2s. 6d.

Dante Vignettes.

PRESS NOTICES.

"The phrasing is expressive and artistic. The rhymes are generally perfect, and of all or nearly every piece it may be said that it possesses the charm of sweet and satisfying melody."—*Academy*.

"They are sweetly worded, musical, often marked with a classical imagery; . . . and always thoughtful and worth attention."—*Aberdeen Free Press*.

"Mr. Chester is himself a poet of a very high order, and his interpretation of Dante is thoroughly sympathetic."—*Baptist*.

"The workmanship of the sonnets is always fine."—*Scotsman*.

"The sonnets have the qualities of dignity, compression, and self-restraint."—*Birmingham Post*.

"Metrically chaste and replete with very beautiful language."—*Liverpool Porcupine*.

"Thoroughly poetical in thought and expression, and often excellent in workmanship."—*Queen*.

"Mr. Chester has something of true poetic fire, which, combined with gracefulness of expression, make his work particularly noticeable."—*Public Opinion*.

"The sonnets have the true ring of verse, and the true enthusiasm for Dante."—*The Author*.

"Very polished in form; good taste and love of good poetry and elevated things shown through the little volume."—*Bookman*.

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.



